



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# PLANS FINALIZED FOR THE NEW STATE VETERANS HOME

Last week, leadership from within the SD Department of Veterans Affairs met at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home (MJFSVH) in Hot Springs with all of the partners involved in the construction of the new state veterans home. The draft blue prints were viewed and reviewed to ensure that all issues were addressed.

Representatives from TSP, the architectural, engineering and design company that has done the bulk of the work, interacted with electrical, IT, mechanical engineers, and department staff as every detail on the extensive plans were examined and re-examined. This process marked the final step before the final bid package is completed. The VA has one final review and then the project is scheduled to be bid in February, 2013; with hopes to have the bids awarded by April 1, 2013.

Once the VA has given their final approval, Building Four (the old infirmary) on the MJFSVH campus will be torn down and site prepared for construction. Once the new building is completed, Building Three will be torn down.

"This project has not taken weeks or months, it has taken years to get this far," said Deputy Secretary Steve Harding. "It will be very exciting to see this project start construction. This new state veterans home will be a first-class facility for our veterans and will continue to provide excellent care for them for decades."



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## VA PUBLISHES ITS 2012 PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Recently, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published its 2012 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR). The PAR enables the President, Congress, veterans service organizations, and the public to assess the VA's performance on behalf of America's veterans.

The 2012 Highlights for the citizen, which presents the most important information from the PAR in a condensed, user-friendly format, will be made available in the near future. You can view the report at: <http://www.va.gov/budget/report/>

The PAR contains Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 performance targets and results achieved against those targets during FY 2012. As such, the PAR is the VA's report card and, in this context, strives to communicate to you, the American people, how well the VA has done, the tangible public benefits the VA has produced, and their forward-looking strategies.

## SANTA SIGHTING AT SDNG MUSEUM

It's official, there was a Santa sighting at the South Dakota National Guard Museum in Pierre on Saturday, December 15!!!!

Unfortunately while Santa was busy visiting with the little ones about what they were getting for Christmas, his reindeer got loose and tracked up the floor. Some might see this as a challenge, but not Museum Director Sonja Johnson. She had those youngsters tracing the hoof prints, and oh what a surprise they found!

While Santa was busy visiting with the little ones, moms and dads had the opportunity to walk around and tour the museum. Although they needed to keep one ear to the dialogue Santa was having to make sure he wasn't promising them more than they deserved, they were able to view the displays!

Along with the visit with Santa and the tour of the museum, everyone got cookies, candy, and holiday pens.



## SDNG DELIVERS HOLIDAY SPIRIT TO VETERANS

The South Dakota National Guard held their annual Christmas party for the residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans home on Saturday, December 15, in Hot Springs.

Guard members and their families shared dinner with the veterans, as well as an evening of Christmas caroling and holiday readings. At the conclusion of the program, gifts were presented to the veterans by 27 little elves.

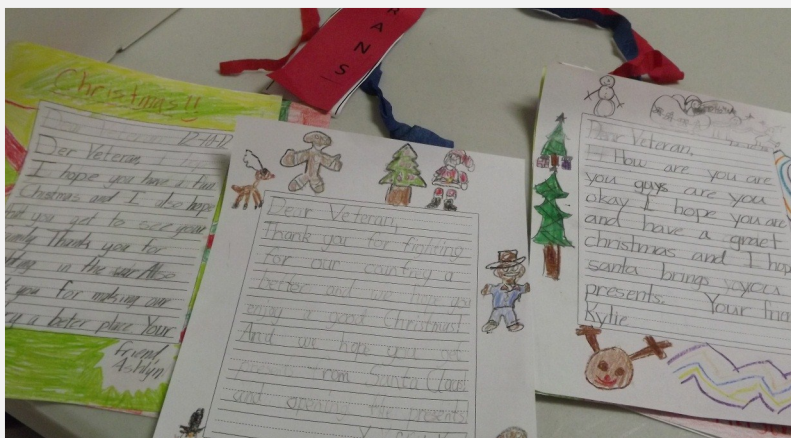
During the program Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, presented Gloria Doohen and Luann Johnson with the "Outstanding Civilian Service Award."

Special thanks to the Guard members that participated in this evening of holiday festivities. Your commitment to this country, to this state and to our veterans is unending. Your selfless sacrifices inspire us all.



## ELKS DELIVER HOLIDAY CHEER AND MORE!

Twas the week before Christmas, when all through the Veterans Home,  
 Residents were busy reciting their favorite holiday song and poem.  
 The cookies and candies were being sampled by all,  
 In hopes that Saint Nicholas would bring them a haul.  
 The Pierre Elks had spent days sorting through packages and gifts,  
 To the veterans they would deliver, no matter the drifts.  
 With Wilcox and Meyer reviewing plans for the new home,  
 Trying to decide if they should add on a dome.  
 When out in the driveway appeared a large caravan,  
 The passengers exited, for delivering gifts was their plan.  
 With boxes of goodies, down the halls they went,  
 To spread holiday cheer during this blessed event.  
 Their eyes how they twinkled, their greetings so cheery,  
 This picturesque snapshot made you all teary.  
 The Elk Elves worked diligently, never taking a break,  
 There were the winks of an eye, and the old-fashioned hand shake.  
 The Elks delivered blankets, pjs, socks, and underwear,  
 Bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and combs for their hair.  
 CDs, puzzles, books, games, phone cards and much, much more,  
 For it was like someone delivered a whole new store.  
 But perhaps the most wonderful gift that they brought,  
 Were the stacks of cards tied up with a knot.  
 Hand designed from young students in Pierre,  
 Thanking veterans for their service and extending them cheer.  
 The Elks took time to visit with the veterans, one on one,  
 They thanked them profusely for the freedom they won.  
 After fellowship, coffee, cookies, and a wipe of their chin,  
 The reality set in, their trip back to Pierre would have to begin.  
 And as they drove off the campus you could hear them cheer,  
 Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good year!





## BOARD OF REGENTS RECOGNIZES BLACK HILLS STATE'S VETS CLUB

The South Dakota Board of Regents (BOR) recently recognized Black Hills State University Veterans Club for their outstanding academic, community and leadership service.

The BOR presented the community service award to the Yellow Jackets Vets Club. The community service award recognizes student organizations for community service outside of the campus.

The Vets Club provides a social group to help military veterans become successful as civilians and college students. Throughout the year, the club organized a recognition ceremony for the 842nd National Guard Engineering Company who spent a year deployed to Afghanistan; volunteered with the Women of War Project in Belle Fourche; volunteered at a chili feed sponsored by the Spearfish American Legion; and held fundraisers for care packages



Pictured left to right, front row: Sandra Crain, veterans' affairs certifying official; Mike McNeil, veterans' representative; Troy Smith, veterans' staff; Tyrell Hanzlik, student veteran and member of the 842nd; Chris Baley, business administration management major from Spearfish and Vets Club president; Dr. Kathryn Johnson, BOR president; Dr. Jack Warner, BOR executive director and CEO; and Dr. Kay Schallenkamp, BHSU president. Back row: Fred Nelson, BHSU network and computing services director; Tom Taylor, student veteran and business administration major from Rapid City; Ryan Grams, former Vets Club president; and Rocky Maier, BHSU Student Senate president.



ages  
sent to the 842nd.

A BHSU Vets Center recently opened on campus providing a location for the club's biweekly meetings. The center also provides support services, program information, and a location for students in the service to network and create opportunities for peer support and mentoring.

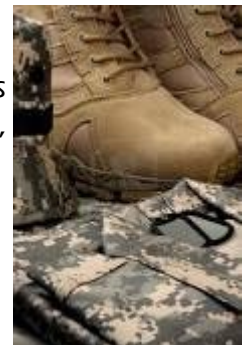
## SD GUARD UNIT TO DEPLOY TO AFGHANISTAN

The South Dakota Army National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of Pierre has received its official mobilization order for deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Sixty-nine Soldiers assigned to the 152nd's Headquarters Company are scheduled to deploy in July 2013.

The mission of the 152nd is to provide multi-functional combat support to forces throughout an assigned area of operation. Multi-functional areas include supply, transportation, maintenance and ordnance support.

The 152nd will report to Fort Hood, Texas, for several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas. This is the first deployment for the unit.



# Upcoming Events

Jan. 1—Happy New Year

Jan. 7—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

Jan. 8—SD 88th Legislative Session Opens

Jan. 8—Governor Daugaard's State of the State Address

Feb. 4—VFW Legislative Reception

Feb. 5—American Legion Legislative Reception

Apr. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

Jul. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

Oct. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

## JOHNSON RECOGNIZES SDNG

Last week Senator Tim Johnson recognized the 376th anniversary of the National Guard and the South Dakota National Guard's 150th anniversary with a Congressional Record statement.

During his statement Johnson highlighted the history of the South Dakota National Guard and its service to South Dakota and the United States.

Senator Johnson concluded his statement with "The Guard personnel from the Mount Rushmore State represent the best South Dakota has to offer. They have consistently served our state and country with resolve, compassion and honor. On the occasion of the South Dakota Guard's 150th anniversary observance, please join me in commending Guard personnel for their great service, both to the citizens of South Dakota as well as to the nation. I applaud their willingness to answer the call to duty."

Full text of the Congressional Record Statement can be found at: [http://www.johnson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=PressReleases&ContentRecord\\_id=90593431-4676-4c6b-9e32-4528da034dbe&ContentType\\_id=c3d73cfe-c14b-4676-96ed-43a65aea57c0&Group\\_id=6ae28060-e7a2-46ba-bbab-cce51bb5cb91](http://www.johnson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=90593431-4676-4c6b-9e32-4528da034dbe&ContentType_id=c3d73cfe-c14b-4676-96ed-43a65aea57c0&Group_id=6ae28060-e7a2-46ba-bbab-cce51bb5cb91)

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